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# Evaluation of the effects of added vitamin D3 in maternal diets on sow and pig performance

## Abstract

A total of 84 sows (PIC 1050) and their litters were used to determine the effects of supplementing high levels of dietary maternal vitamin D3 on sow and pig performance, serum 25(OH)D3, milk vitamin D3, neonatal bone mineralization, and neonatal tissue vitamin D3. After breeding, sows were randomly assigned to 1 of 3 dietary vitamin D3 treatments (680, 1,360, or 2,720 IU/lb of complete diets). Sows were bled on d 0 and 100 of gestation, and at farrowing and weaning (d 21). Pig BW was recorded at birth and weaning, and serum was collected from 2 pigs/litter at birth, on d 10, and at weaning. A total of 54 piglets (18/treatment) were euthanized at birth and necropsied to sample bones and tissues. Sow and suckling pig performance and neonatal bone ash and bone density did not differ ( $P > 0.10$ ) among maternal vitamin D3 treatments, but sow serum 25(OH)D3 and milk vitamin D3 increased (linear,  $P < 0.01$ ) with increasing maternal vitamin D3 supplementation. Piglet serum 25(OH)D3 increased (quadratic,  $P < 0.03$ ) with increased maternal vitamin D3. Neonatal kidney vitamin D3 tended (quadratic,  $P = 0.08$ ) to decrease with increasing maternal vitamin D3, but liver vitamin D3 tended (linear,  $P = 0.09$ ) to increase with increasing maternal vitamin D3; however, physiological concentrations of vitamin D within these tissues were low regardless of statistical tendencies. At weaning, a subsample of 180 pigs (PIC 327 Å– 1050) were used in a 3 Å– 2 split plot design for 35 d to determine the effects of maternal vitamin D3 and 2 levels of dietary vitamin D3 (816 or 8,160 IU/lb) from d 0 to 10 postweaning on piglet growth and serum 25(OH)D3. Overall (d 0 to 35), nursery ADG and F/G were not affected by either source of vitamin D3, but ADFI tended (quadratic,  $P < 0.06$ ) to decrease with increasing maternal vitamin D3 because pigs from sows fed 1,360 IU of vitamin D3/ lb had lower ADFI compared with pigs from sows fed 680 or 2,720 IU vitamin D3/ lb. Nursery pig serum 25(OH)D3 increased (linear,  $P < 0.01$ ) with increasing maternal vitamin D3 on d 0 (weaning), and maternal Å– diet interactions ( $P < 0.01$ ) were observed on d 10 and 21 because pigs from sows fed 680 IU vitamin D3/lb had greater increases in serum 25(OH)D3 when fed 8,160 IU vitamin D3/lb compared with pigs from sows fed 1,360 IU vitamin D3/lb. In conclusion, sow and pig serum 25(OH)D3 and milk vitamin D3 can be increased by increasing maternal vitamin D3, and nursery pig serum 25(OH)D3 can be increased by increasing dietary vitamin D3; however, sow and pig performance and neonatal bone mineralization was not influenced by increasing vitamin D3 dietary levels.; Swine Day, Manhattan, KS, November 21, 2013

## Keywords

Swine day, 2013; Kansas Agricultural Experiment Station contribution; no. 14-044-S; Report of progress (Kansas State University. Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service); 1092; Serum 25(OH)D3; Vitamin D3; Sow performance; Pig performance

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# Evaluation of the Effects of Added Vitamin D<sub>3</sub> in Maternal Diets on Sow and Pig Performance<sup>1</sup>

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## Summary

A total of 84 sows (PIC 1050) and their litters were used to determine the effects of supplementing high levels of dietary maternal vitamin D<sub>3</sub> on sow and pig performance, serum 25(OH)D<sub>3</sub>, milk vitamin D<sub>3</sub>, neonatal bone mineralization, and neonatal tissue vitamin D<sub>3</sub>. After breeding, sows were randomly assigned to 1 of 3 dietary vitamin D<sub>3</sub> treatments (680, 1,360, or 2,720 IU/lb of complete diets). Sows were bled on d 0 and 100 of gestation, and at farrowing and weaning (d 21). Pig BW was recorded at birth and weaning, and serum was collected from 2 pigs/litter at birth, on d 10, and at weaning. A total of 54 piglets (18/treatment) were euthanized at birth and necropsied to sample bones and tissues. Sow and suckling pig performance and neonatal bone ash and bone density did not differ ( $P > 0.10$ ) among maternal vitamin D<sub>3</sub> treatments, but sow serum 25(OH)D<sub>3</sub> and milk vitamin D<sub>3</sub> increased (linear,  $P < 0.01$ ) with increasing maternal vitamin D<sub>3</sub> supplementation. Piglet serum 25(OH)D<sub>3</sub> increased (quadratic,  $P < 0.03$ ) with increased maternal vitamin D<sub>3</sub>. Neonatal kidney vitamin D<sub>3</sub> tended (quadratic,  $P = 0.08$ ) to decrease with increasing maternal vitamin D<sub>3</sub>, but liver vitamin D<sub>3</sub> tended (linear,  $P = 0.09$ ) to increase with increasing maternal vitamin D<sub>3</sub>; however, physiological concentrations of vitamin D within these tissues were low regardless of statistical tendencies.

At weaning, a subsample of 180 pigs (PIC 327 × 1050) were used in a 3 × 2 split plot design for 35 d to determine the effects of maternal vitamin D<sub>3</sub> and 2 levels of dietary vitamin D<sub>3</sub> (816 or 8,160 IU/lb) from d 0 to 10 postweaning on piglet growth and serum 25(OH)D<sub>3</sub>. Overall (d 0 to 35), nursery ADG and F/G were not affected by either source of vitamin D<sub>3</sub>, but ADFI tended (quadratic,  $P < 0.06$ ) to decrease with increasing maternal vitamin D<sub>3</sub> because pigs from sows fed 1,360 IU of vitamin D<sub>3</sub>/lb had lower ADFI compared with pigs from sows fed 680 or 2,720 IU vitamin D<sub>3</sub>/lb. Nursery pig serum 25(OH)D<sub>3</sub> increased (linear,  $P < 0.01$ ) with increasing maternal vitamin D<sub>3</sub> on d 0 (weaning), and maternal × diet interactions ( $P < 0.01$ ) were observed on d 10 and 21 because pigs from sows fed 680 IU vitamin D<sub>3</sub>/lb had greater increases in serum 25(OH)D<sub>3</sub> when fed 8,160 IU vitamin D<sub>3</sub>/lb compared with pigs from sows fed 1,360 IU vitamin D<sub>3</sub>/lb. In conclusion, sow and pig serum 25(OH)D<sub>3</sub> and milk vitamin D<sub>3</sub> can be increased by increasing maternal vitamin D<sub>3</sub>, and nursery pig serum 25(OH)D<sub>3</sub> can be increased by increasing dietary vitamin D<sub>3</sub>; however, sow and pig performance and neonatal bone mineralization was not influenced by increasing vitamin D<sub>3</sub> dietary levels.

<sup>1</sup> Appreciation is expressed to Heartland Assays, DSM Nutritional Products, and Iowa State University College of Veterinary Medicine for providing funding and laboratory analysis for this project.

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## Introduction

Speculation has surfaced recently about serum 25(OH)D<sub>3</sub> concentrations of nursery pigs reared in modern swine production facilities, mainly because of documented cases in which vitamin D<sub>3</sub> has been absent from vitamin premixes fed to pigs (Feedstuffs, 2010<sup>4</sup>). In these cases, large percentages of pigs developed metabolic bone disease, which is categorized as a disturbance of normal bone formation and remodeling and can lead to bone fractures and clinical signs of rickets. In an effort to reduce these signs, guidelines for serum 25(OH)D<sub>3</sub> concentrations have been advocated. A recent survey of swine across different classes indicate that a significant proportion of pigs have serum 25(OH)D<sub>3</sub> concentrations below these guidelines (Madson, 2011<sup>5</sup>). Because most pigs are housed and raised in confinement facilities, pigs no longer have access to direct sunlight, which is needed for the endogenous production of vitamin D<sub>3</sub>; therefore, these surveys seem to indicate additional vitamin D<sub>3</sub> supplementation is warranted, but little direct evidence characterizes these levels with production parameters such as weaning performance, subsequent nursery performance, or metabolic indicators such as bone ash or density.

For the suckling pig, vitamin D is supplied from maternal sources until after weaning. Previous research by Goff et al. (1984<sup>6</sup>) reported increased piglet serum 25(OH)D<sub>3</sub> concentrations in newborn pigs from sows dosed with vitamin D<sub>3</sub> intramuscularly 20 d prior to farrowing, suggesting vitamin D and its metabolites are transferred transplacentally. Surprisingly little research has quantified the effects of maternal feeding vitamin D<sub>3</sub> on piglet serum 25(OH)D<sub>3</sub> concentration. In addition, previous research conducted at Kansas State University (Flohr et al., 2011<sup>7</sup> and 2012<sup>8</sup>) concluded that supplementing vitamin D<sub>3</sub> to the suckling and nursery pig can increase serum 25(OH)D<sub>3</sub> concentrations but observed no effects on bone mineralization or growth performance. Finally, because feed is a low-cost method of D<sub>3</sub> supplementation, maternal supplementation may be a lower-cost and less labor-intensive method of manipulating serum 25(OH)D<sub>3</sub> concentrations in offspring compared with oral dosing. Therefore, the objectives in this experiment were to evaluate the effects of supplementing high levels of vitamin D<sub>3</sub> to sows on maternal performance, milk vitamin D<sub>3</sub> concentrations, sow and pig serum 25(OH)D<sub>3</sub>, Ca and P concentrations, subsequent pig performance, neonatal bone mineralization, and neonatal tissue (liver and kidney) vitamin D<sub>3</sub> concentrations.

## Procedures

Experimental procedures and animal care were approved by the K-State Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee. This experiment was conducted at the K-State Swine Teaching and Research Facility in Manhattan, KS, and was conducted from the months of January through August of 2012.

A total of 84 sows (PIC 1050) from 3 consecutive farrowing groups and their litters were used in this study. Following breeding, sows were randomly assigned to 1 of 3

<sup>4</sup> Feedstuffs. 2010. Kent feeds recalls certain swine feeds. Accessed April 4, 2011. <http://www.feedstuffs.com>.

<sup>5</sup> Madson, D.M. 2011. Metabolic bone disease in swine: a diagnostic dilemma. Pages 8–18 in Proc. 52<sup>nd</sup> Ann. George A. Young Swine Health and Management Conference. Sioux City, NE.

<sup>6</sup> Goff, J.P., R.L. Horst, and E.T. Littledike. 1984. Effect of sow vitamin D status at parturition on the vitamin D status of neonatal piglet. J. Nutr. 114:163–169.

<sup>7</sup> Flohr et al. Swine Day 2011. Report of Progress 1056, pp. 34–45.

<sup>8</sup> Flohr et al. Swine Day 2012. Report of Progress 1074, pp. 35–47.

dietary vitamin D<sub>3</sub> treatments (680, 1,360, or 2,720 IU/lb) throughout 3 consecutive farrowing groups. There were 27 sows per treatment and 7 to 11 replications per farrowing group. During d 0 through 100 of gestation, sows were fed 4.4 lb/d of the gestation diets. From d 100 to farrowing, sows were fed 5.5 lb/d of the gestation diets. During d 0 through 110, sows were housed in gestation stalls (7.0 × 2.0 ft). On d 110, sows were transported to the farrowing house and were housed in farrowing crates. Both the gestation and farrowing barns were totally enclosed, environmentally controlled, and mechanically ventilated buildings. The farrowing barn contained 29 farrowing crates (7.0 × 2.0 ft for the sow and 7.0 × 3.2 ft for the pigs) that were each equipped with a single feeder and nipple waterer. After farrowing, sows were switched to lactation diets. Gestation and lactation diets were formulated to contain 0.56% and 0.94% standardized ileal digestible (SID) lysine, respectively (Table 1), and contained 40% and 20% dried distillers grains with solubles (DDGS), respectively. For the first 3 d after farrowing, sows were gradually provided increased feed according to appetite. After d 3, all sows were allowed ad libitum access to the lactation diet. Temperature in the farrowing house was maintained at a minimum of 68°F, and supplemental heat was provided to piglets with heat lamps.

Lactation feed intake was determined by measuring feed disappearance on d 0, 7, 14, and 21 (weaning). Sow BW was measured at breeding, d 110 of gestation, within 24 h after farrowing, and at weaning to determine gestation weight gain and lactation weight loss. Sows were bled on d 0 and 100 of gestation, within 12 h after farrowing, and on d 10 and 21 (weaning) in lactation to determine serum 25(OH)D<sub>3</sub>, Ca, and P concentrations. Milk samples were collected within 12 h after farrowing, and on d 10 and d 21 (weaning) to determine milk vitamin D<sub>3</sub> concentrations. Milk samples were obtained by an intravenous injection of oxytocin (1 mL, Agrilabs, St. Joseph, MO), and milk was collected from all functional glands.

At birth, all piglets were weighed individually and ear tagged for identification. The second and fifth pigs born within each litter were bled prior to suckling on d 0, on d 10, and at weaning to determine piglet serum 25(OH)D<sub>3</sub>, Ca, and P. The seventh pig born from 54 litters (18 pigs per treatment, 6 replications per farrowing group) was euthanized prior to suckling and necropsied for bone and tissue sample analysis to determine neonatal pig bone ash content, bone density, and tissue vitamin D<sub>3</sub> concentrations. Mummified and stillborn pigs were recorded to calculate total born and live born piglets. Although minimal, cross-fostering was conducted within 24 h postfarrowing to help standardize litter size within vitamin D<sub>3</sub> dietary treatments. Pigs were weighed after fostering to measure fostered litter weight. At weaning, piglet weights and piglet counts were recorded to determine individual and litter weight gains, along with survivability.

At weaning, a subsample of 180 multi-sex pigs (PIC 327 × 1050) from the first sow group were used in a 3 × 2 split plot design for 35 d to determine the effects of maternal vitamin D<sub>3</sub> concentration and 2 levels of dietary vitamin D<sub>3</sub> (816 or 8,160 IU/lb; from d 0 to 10 postweaning) on growth performance and serum 25(OH)D<sub>3</sub>, Ca, and P. At weaning, pigs were allotted to pens based on their previously administered maternal vitamin D<sub>3</sub> treatments to maintain the integrity of weaning weights consistent with maternal vitamin D<sub>3</sub> effects. Pens were then randomly assigned to dietary vitamin D<sub>3</sub> treatments. There were 6 pigs/pen and 5 pens per treatment. Dietary vitamin D<sub>3</sub> treat-



ments were provided from d 0 to 10 in the nursery and were fed in a pellet form (Table 2). Common Phase 2 and 3 diets were provided to pigs from d 10 to 21 and d 21 to 35, respectively. Common diets were formulated to contain 1,800 IU/kg vitamin D<sub>3</sub> and were fed in a meal form. All pens (4 × 5 ft) had woven wire flooring, one 3-hole, dry self-feeder, and a nipple waterer to allow for ad libitum access to feed and water. All pigs and feeders were weighed on d 0, 5, 10, 17, 21, 28, and 35 after weaning to determine ADG, ADFI, and F/G. Blood samples were collected from 10 pigs/treatment on d 0, 10, 24, and 35 to determine serum 25(OH)D<sub>3</sub>, Ca, and P. All blood, milk, and tissue sample analyses were conducted by Heartland Assays (Ames, IA) to determine serum 25(OH)D<sub>3</sub>, Ca and P, and milk and tissue vitamin D<sub>3</sub> concentrations.

To achieve the dietary vitamin D<sub>3</sub> concentrations, a premix was made containing a vitamin D<sub>3</sub> supplement (Rovimix D<sub>3</sub>, 500,000 IU/g; DSM Nutritional Products Inc., Parsippany, NJ). This supplement was then mixed into a rice hull carrier to form the premix and was added to the control diet (625 IU vitamin D<sub>3</sub>/lb) by replacing corn. Vitamin premixes and complete diet samples were analyzed for vitamin D<sub>3</sub> concentration by DSM Nutritional Products.

Necropsies were performed onsite and in compliance with the college's standard operating procedures. Pigs were euthanized with an intravenous overdose of sodium pentobarbital (Fatal Plus, Vortech Pharmaceuticals, Dearborn, MI). Right femurs and second ribs were collected to determine bone ash content, and left second ribs were used to determine bone density. Whole liver and kidney tissues were collected and frozen immediately at -4°F until samples were prepared for specific analysis.

Bone densities were determined at the Iowa State University College of Veterinary Medicine (Ames, IA). All left second ribs were stripped to the periosteum, submerged in water for 4 h under 12.09 psi vacuum, and blotted dry prior to recording bone weight. Bone volume was determined using weight in air minus weight under water according to the Archimedes principle. Bone density values were then expressed as ounces of bone/in.<sup>3</sup> volume.

Bone ash analysis, which was performed on the right femurs and right second rib, was conducted at the K-State Swine Nutrition Laboratory in Manhattan, KS. Bones were cleaned to the periosteum and were split perpendicular to the long axis of the diaphysis. Fat extraction was conducted by placing bones in cellulose thimbles and inserting thimbles in the main chambers of soxhlet extractors. The extraction solvent was petroleum ether. Fat extraction was conducted for 7 d. At the completion of the extraction period, bone samples were dried in a forced-air oven at 212°F until a consistent dry weight was achieved. Then bones were ashed at 1,112°F for 24 h. Ash weights were recorded and expressed as a percentage of dry fat-free bone.

Data were analyzed using the MIXED procedure in SAS (SAS Institute, Inc., Cary, NC). Maternal performance data were analyzed with sow as the experimental unit, treatment as a fixed effect, and farrowing group as a random effect. Nursery performance was analyzed as a 3 × 2 split plot design, and pen was used as the experimental unit. Additional contrasts were used to determine the effects of early nursery vitamin D<sub>3</sub> treatments and the interaction of maternal vitamin D<sub>3</sub> and early nursery dietary vitamin D<sub>3</sub> treatments. Serum 25(OH)D<sub>3</sub>, Ca, P, and milk vitamin D<sub>3</sub> data were analyzed

using the repeated measures function to determine the effects of treatment variables over time, and individual pig was the experimental unit. Bone ash, bone density, and tissue vitamin D<sub>3</sub> concentrations were analyzed using individual pig as the experimental unit. Differences among treatments were considered significant with  $P \leq 0.05$  and trends if  $P > 0.05$  and  $\leq 0.10$ .

## Results and Discussion

Analysis of vitamin D<sub>3</sub> concentrations in the diets verified that they were within acceptable analytical variation of formulated dietary values (Table 3). For maternal performance, increasing supplementation of vitamin D<sub>3</sub> from 680 to 2,720 IU/lb of the complete diet did not influence ( $P > 0.05$ ; Table 4) sow BW gain in gestation, lactation ADFI, or sow BW loss in lactation. In addition, maternal vitamin D<sub>3</sub> treatments used in this study did not affect ( $P > 0.05$ ) litter performance criteria or piglet BW at birth or weaning.

A maternal  $\times$  day interaction ( $P < 0.01$ ; Table 5) was observed for sow serum 25(OH)D<sub>3</sub> because 25(OH)D<sub>3</sub> was not different among sows on d 0 of gestation serum, but increasing maternal vitamin D<sub>3</sub> increased (linear,  $P < 0.01$ ) serum 25(OH)D<sub>3</sub> on d 100 of gestation, at farrowing, and at weaning. Milk vitamin D<sub>3</sub> concentrations were not influenced by sampling day ( $P = 0.56$ ); however, milk vitamin D<sub>3</sub> increased (linear,  $P < 0.01$ ) with increasing maternal dietary vitamin D<sub>3</sub> at farrowing, on d 10 in lactation, and at weaning. A day effect was observed ( $P < 0.01$ ) for piglet serum 25(OH)D<sub>3</sub> as serum concentrations increased through time from birth to weaning, and serum 25(OH)D<sub>3</sub> increased (quadratic,  $P < 0.03$ ) with increasing maternal vitamin D<sub>3</sub> at birth, on d 10 in lactation, and at weaning.

No differences ( $P > 0.05$ ) in neonatal bone ash values were observed for femurs or second ribs. Rib bone density was not influenced ( $P > 0.05$ ) by maternal vitamin D<sub>3</sub> concentrations. Kidney vitamin D<sub>3</sub> concentrations tended to decrease (quadratic,  $P = 0.09$ ) with increasing maternal vitamin D<sub>3</sub> because pigs from sows fed 1,360 IU vitamin D<sub>3</sub>/lb had much lower tissue vitamin D<sub>3</sub> concentrations compared with pigs from sows fed 680 or 2,720 IU vitamin D<sub>3</sub>/lb. Liver tissue vitamin D<sub>3</sub> concentrations tended to increase (linear,  $P = 0.08$ ) with increased maternal dietary vitamin D<sub>3</sub>. Overall, means associated with tissue vitamin D<sub>3</sub> concentrations were low because many samples were below the lower detectable limit of 0.001 ng/mg, which suggests that the neonatal liver and kidney are not high in vitamin D<sub>3</sub> content at birth and that newborn pigs do not store vitamin D<sub>3</sub> in the liver and kidney, perhaps the result of little to no hepatic or renal fat development within the newborn animal. Previous research (Clements and Fraser, 1988<sup>9</sup>) concluded that fetal rats store 25(OH)D<sub>3</sub> in muscle tissue at birth, and this is the primary source of vitamin D available to the animal for the first 3 weeks of its life.

During the nursery portion of the study, no interactions between maternal vitamin D<sub>3</sub> and dietary vitamin D<sub>3</sub> were observed ( $P > 0.05$ ; Table 6) in growth performance. Overall (d 0 to 35), ADFI tended (quadratic,  $P = 0.06$ ) to decrease with increasing vitamin D<sub>3</sub>, with pigs from sows fed 1,360 IU vitamin D<sub>3</sub>/lb having lower ADFI compared with pigs

<sup>9</sup> Clements, M.R., and D.R. Fraser. 1988. Vitamin D supply to the rat fetus and neonate. J. Clin. Invest. 81:1768–1773.

from sows fed either 680 or 2,720 IU vitamin D<sub>3</sub>/lb; however, maternal and nursery vitamin D<sub>3</sub> supplementation did not influence ( $P > 0.05$ ) overall (d 0 to 35) ADG or F/G.

A day effect ( $P < 0.01$ ) was observed for nursery pig serum 25(OH)D<sub>3</sub>. At weaning (d 0), pig serum 25(OH)D<sub>3</sub> increased (linear,  $P < 0.01$ ) with increasing maternal vitamin D<sub>3</sub>. Maternal  $\times$  diet interactions ( $P < 0.01$ ) were observed on d 10 and 21 because pigs from sows fed 680 IU vitamin D<sub>3</sub>/lb had greater increases in serum 25(OH)D<sub>3</sub> when fed 8,160 IU vitamin D<sub>3</sub>/lb compared with pigs from sows fed 1,360 IU vitamin D<sub>3</sub>/lb. On d 35, serum 25(OH)D<sub>3</sub> concentrations did not differ among maternal treatments, but a diet effect ( $P < 0.04$ ) was observed with increased nursery diet vitamin D<sub>3</sub> increasing serum 25(OH)D<sub>3</sub>.

A day effect ( $P < 0.01$ ; Figure 1) was observed for sow serum Ca. Sow serum Ca tended (linear,  $P = 0.07$ ) to be higher on d 0 of gestation for sows assigned to the 2,720 IU vitamin D<sub>3</sub>/lb treatment compared with sows assigned to lower maternal vitamin D<sub>3</sub> treatments, which reflects potential differences prior to initiation of maternal vitamin D<sub>3</sub> treatments. On d 100 of gestation, increasing maternal dietary vitamin D<sub>3</sub> tended to decrease (quadratic,  $P = 0.09$ ) serum Ca. Serum P concentrations were not influenced ( $P > 0.10$ ) by maternal vitamin D<sub>3</sub> treatments or by sampling day ( $P = 0.18$ ). In terms of piglet serum Ca, a day effect was observed ( $P < 0.01$ ; Figure 2) for serum Ca concentrations. Serum Ca also tended to decrease (linear,  $P = 0.08$ ) with increasing maternal vitamin D<sub>3</sub> on d 10 of lactation. Serum P concentrations were not influenced ( $P > 0.10$ ) by maternal vitamin D<sub>3</sub> treatments, but they tended to be different based on day of sampling ( $P = 0.08$ ). Nursery pig serum Ca concentrations were not influenced by maternal or nursery vitamin D<sub>3</sub> concentrations, but for serum P a tendency was observed (quadratic,  $P = 0.08$ ; Figure 3) for P concentrations to increase within increasing maternal vitamin D<sub>3</sub> on d 10 after weaning was observed, and day of blood collection influenced serum P concentrations ( $P < 0.01$ ). Although several statistical tendencies were observed within several collection days, all serum Ca and P means collected fell within previously described physiological ranges (Friendship et al., 1984<sup>10</sup>) associated with normal healthy pigs of similar stages of production.

In summary, supplementing vitamin D<sub>3</sub> via the maternal diet is an effective way to increase serum 25(OH)D<sub>3</sub> of the young pig by increasing transplacental transfer of 25(OH)D<sub>3</sub> from the sow to the fetus, along with increased transfer during lactation from the increased milk vitamin D<sub>3</sub> concentrations. In addition, maternal supplementation and increased vitamin D<sub>3</sub> in nursery diets can increase nursery pig serum 25(OH)D<sub>3</sub> concentrations, but the increase in maternal supplementation did not influence sow or pig performance, sow or pig serum Ca and P, or neonatal bone traits. Future research is needed to determine optimal serum 25(OH)D<sub>3</sub> levels for proper bone development and ideal Ca and P absorption in pigs. More work examining potential impacts of vitamin D on the immune system or other novel biological processes in pigs may offer additional insights into possible benefits of vitamin D supplements for pigs.

<sup>10</sup> Friendship et al. 1984. Hematology and biochemistry reference values for Ontario swine. Can. J. Comp. Med. 48:390–393.



**Table 1. Composition of sow diets (as-fed basis)<sup>1,2</sup>**

Item	Gestation	Lactation
Ingredient, %		
Corn	52.96	52.19
Soybean meal (46.5% CP)	2.99	23.88
Dried distillers grains with solubles	40.00	20.00
Monocalcium P (21% P)	0.65	0.90
Limestone	1.90	1.60
Salt	0.50	0.50
Vitamin premix <sup>3</sup>	0.50	0.50
Trace mineral premix	0.15	0.15
L-lysine HCl	0.23	0.15
Phytase <sup>4</sup>	0.13	0.13
Total	100	100
Calculated analysis		
ME, kcal/lb	1,492	1,488
CP, %	17.0	21.1
Total lysine, %	0.72	1.13
Standardized ileal digestible lysine, %	0.56	0.97
Ca, %	0.88	0.88
P, %	0.59	0.64
Available P, % <sup>5</sup>	0.50	0.48

<sup>1</sup> A total of 84 sows and litters were used to determine the effects of supplemental vitamin D<sub>3</sub> on maternal performance, subsequent pig performance, sow and piglet serum 25(OH)D<sub>3</sub>, Ca and P, milk vitamin D<sub>3</sub>, neonatal bone mineralization, and piglet tissue vitamin D<sub>3</sub> concentrations.

<sup>2</sup> Vitamin D<sub>3</sub> premixes were mixed to contain 1,000,000 IU vitamin D<sub>3</sub>/lb of premix by blending vitamin D<sub>3</sub> (Rovimix D; DSM Nutritional Products, Parsippany, NJ) with rice hulls. Premix replaced a percentage of corn to achieve the desired treatment vitamin D<sub>3</sub> concentrations.

<sup>3</sup> Vitamin premix provided 625 IU vitamin D<sub>3</sub>/lb of the complete diet.

<sup>4</sup> Natuphos 600, BASF, Florham Park, NJ. Provided 341 phytase units (FTU)/lb of diet.

<sup>5</sup> Phytase provided 0.12% available P to gestation and lactation diets.

**Table 2. Composition of nursery diets (as-fed basis)<sup>1</sup>**

Item	Phase 1 <sup>2</sup>	Phase 2 <sup>3</sup>	Phase 3 <sup>4</sup>
Ingredient, %			
Corn	39.58	44.73	65.78
Soybean meal (46.5% CP)	17.33	23.41	30.67
Dried distillers grains with solubles	5.00	15.00	---
Spray-dried porcine plasma	5.00	---	---
Spray-dried blood cells	1.25	---	---
Spray-dried whey	25.00	10.00	---
Select menhaden fish meal	---	4.50	---
Soybean oil	3.00	---	---
Monocalcium P (21% P)	0.85	0.15	1.03
Limestone	1.00	0.70	0.98
Salt	0.30	0.30	0.35
Zinc oxide	0.39	0.25	---
Trace mineral premix	0.15	0.15	0.15
Vitamin premix <sup>5</sup>	0.25	0.25	0.25
L-lysine HCl	0.20	0.28	0.36
DL-methionine	0.13	0.05	0.13
L-threonine	0.05	0.05	0.13
L-isoleucine	0.10	---	---
Phytase <sup>6</sup>	0.13	0.17	0.17
Acidifier <sup>7</sup>	0.20	---	---
Vitamin E, 20,000 IU	0.05	---	---
Choline chloride 60%	0.04	---	---
Vitamin D <sub>3</sub> premix <sup>8</sup>	0.02	0.02	0.02
Total	100	100	100
Calculated analysis			
ME, kcal/lb	1,549	1,506	1,503
CP, %	21.2	23.1	20.4
Standardized ileal digestible lysine, %	1.35	1.30	1.25
Ca, %	0.80	0.70	0.68
P, %	0.71	0.63	0.61
Available P, % <sup>9</sup>	0.63	0.50	0.42

<sup>1</sup> A total of 180 pigs (PIC 327 × 1050; initially 21 d of age) were used in a 3 × 2 split plot design for 35 d to determine the effects of maternal vitamin D<sub>3</sub> and early nursery dietary vitamin D<sub>3</sub> on nursery growth performance and serum 25(OH) D<sub>3</sub> concentrations.

<sup>2</sup> Phase 1 diets were fed from d 0 to 10.

<sup>3</sup> Common Phase 2 diets were fed from d 10 to 24.

<sup>4</sup> Common Phase 3 diets were fed from d 24 to 35.

<sup>5</sup> Vitamin premix provided 625 IU vitamin D<sub>3</sub>/lb of the complete diet.

<sup>6</sup> Natuphos 600 (BASF, Florham Park, NJ) provided 354, 463, and 463 phytase units (FTU)/lb of the complete diet for Phase 1, 2, and 3 diets, respectively.

<sup>7</sup> KemGest (Kemin Industries Inc., Des Moines, IA).

<sup>8</sup> Vitamin D<sub>3</sub> premixes were mixed to contain 1,000,000 IU vitamin D<sub>3</sub>/lb of premix by blending vitamin D<sub>3</sub> (Rovimix D; DSM Nutritional Products, Parsippany, NJ) with rice hulls. Premix replaced a percentage of corn to achieve the desired treatment vitamin D<sub>3</sub> concentrations.

<sup>9</sup> Phytase provided 0.12, 0.13, and 0.12% available P for Phase 1, 2, and 3 diets, respectively.

**Table 3. Analyzed dietary vitamin D<sub>3</sub> concentrations (as-fed)<sup>1</sup>**

Maternal diets, IU/lb				
Formulated composition	680	1,360	2,720	
Analyzed composition				
Gestation	683	1,529	3,640	
Lactation	669	1,538	2,817	
		Phase 1 <sup>2</sup>	Phase 2 <sup>3</sup>	Phase 3 <sup>4</sup>
Nursery diets, IU/lb				
Formulated composition	816	8,160	816	816
Analyzed composition	848	8,754	841	867

<sup>1</sup> Vitamin D<sub>3</sub> analysis was performed by DSM Nutritional Products (Parsippany, NJ), and values represent the average of 2 pooled samples per diet.

<sup>2</sup> Phase 1 diets were fed from d 0 to 10.

<sup>3</sup> Common Phase 2 diets were fed from d 10 to 24.

<sup>4</sup> Common Phase 3 diets were fed from d 24 to 35.

**Table 4. The effects of high maternal vitamin D3 on sow and litter performance<sup>1,2</sup>**

Item	Vitamin D <sub>3</sub> , IU/lb			SEM	Probability, <i>P</i> <	
	680	1,360	2,720		Linear	Quadratic
Sows, n	28	26	26			
Sow BW, lb						
Gestation						
d 0	425.7	427.9	423.7	19.29	0.91	0.89
d 110	510.2	518.5	522.7	13.21	0.52	0.80
Change	+84.5	+90.6	+99.0	11.99	0.24	0.92
Lactation						
d 0	489.2	501.7	494.0	13.17	0.89	0.50
d 21 (weaning)	468.1	485.6	479.2	16.59	0.67	0.42
Change	-21.1	-16.1	-14.8	6.14	0.24	0.43
ADFI, lb						
d 0 to wean (d 21)	12.46	12.96	13.18	0.747	0.27	0.63
Piglets						
Litter size, n						
Mummies	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.12	0.88	0.86
Stillborn	0.6	0.4	0.8	0.34	0.60	0.37
Total born alive	13.0	12.5	13.2	0.88	0.74	0.57
Fostered	12.3	12.1	13.0	0.70	0.50	0.48
Weaned	11.2	10.8	11.5	0.652	0.48	0.32
Survivability, % <sup>3</sup>	91.2	89.2	88.5	2.02	0.88	0.58
Piglet BW, lb						
Birth	2.88	2.99	2.96	0.091	0.63	0.47
Weaning	11.71	12.23	12.18	0.364	0.43	0.42

<sup>1</sup> A total of 84 sows (PIC 1050) and their litters were used. Two sows were removed from the 1,360 IU/kg vitamin D<sub>3</sub> treatment because of lameness and illness, and two sows were removed from the 2,720 IU/kg vitamin D<sub>3</sub> treatment because of late-term abortion and farrowing complications.

<sup>2</sup> Sow group was used as a random effect in the statistical model.

<sup>3</sup> Survivability was calculated by dividing the weaned litter size by the fostered litter size.

**Table 5. Effects of high maternal vitamin D<sub>3</sub> on sow and pig serum 25(OH)D<sub>3</sub>, milk vitamin D<sub>3</sub>, neonatal bone traits, and tissue vitamin D<sub>3</sub><sup>1,2</sup>**

	Maternal vitamin D <sub>3</sub> , IU/lb			SEM	Probability, <i>P</i> <	
	680	1,360	2,720		Linear	Quadratic
Sow						
Serum 25(OH)D <sub>3</sub> , ng/mL						
d 0	30.1	26.2	32.0	4.65	0.54	0.27
d 100	33.2	36.5	57.9	4.65	0.01	0.23
Farrowing	30.1	35.4	56.9	4.65	0.01	0.38
Weaning	39.3	52.5	66.3	4.65	0.01	0.31
Milk vitamin D <sub>3</sub> , ng/g						
Farrowing	1.02	2.33	3.97	0.31	0.01	0.37
d 10	0.78	2.33	3.73	0.31	0.01	0.13
Weaning	1.02	1.98	3.53	0.31	0.01	0.73
Piglet						
Serum 25(OH)D <sub>3</sub> , ng/mL						
Birth	4.5	5.9	9.4	0.75	0.01	0.03
d 10	4.4	6.2	10.6	0.75	0.01	0.01
Weaning	5.6	8.0	14.0	0.81	0.01	0.01
Bone ash content, %						
2nd rib	43.6	43.6	43.5	0.80	0.95	0.96
Femur	44.9	44.5	44.8	0.55	0.76	0.66
Bone density, g/mL						
2nd rib	1.30	1.30	1.31	0.02	0.64	0.56
Tissue vitamin D <sub>3</sub> , ng/g						
Kidney	1.68	0.10	1.37	0.842	0.99	0.09
Liver	0.04	0.04	0.19	0.050	0.08	0.16

<sup>1</sup> A total of 84 sows (PIC 1050) and their litters were used to determine the effects of high maternal vitamin D<sub>3</sub> on sow and pig serum 25(OH)D<sub>3</sub>, milk vitamin D<sub>3</sub>, and neonatal bone traits and tissue vitamin D<sub>3</sub>.

<sup>2</sup> Day effects were *P* < 0.01, *P* = 0.56, and *P* < 0.01 for sow 25(OH)D<sub>3</sub>, milk vitamin D<sub>3</sub>, and piglet 25(OH)D<sub>3</sub>, respectively. Maternal × day interactions were *P* < 0.01, *P* = 0.87, and *P* = 0.13 for sow 25(OH)D<sub>3</sub>, milk vitamin D<sub>3</sub>, and piglet 25(OH)D<sub>3</sub>, respectively.



**Table 6. The effects of maternal and early nursery vitamin D<sub>3</sub> supplementation on nursery pig growth performance and serum 25(OH)D<sub>3</sub><sup>1</sup>**

	Maternal vitamin D <sub>3</sub> , IU/lb						Probability, <i>P</i> <				
	680		1,360		2,720		SEM	Maternal × diet interaction	Maternal		Diet
	816	8,160	816	8,160	816	8,160			Linear	Quadratic	
Early nursery vitamin D <sub>3</sub> : <sup>2</sup>											
d 0 to 35											
ADG, lb	0.92	0.92	0.86	0.88	0.92	0.87	0.03	0.56	0.56	0.12	0.75
ADFI, lb	1.32	1.36	1.27	1.25	1.33	1.27	0.04	0.39	0.47	0.06	0.69
F/G	1.43	1.48	1.48	1.42	1.45	1.45	0.03	0.17	0.96	0.71	0.90
Serum 25(OH)D <sub>3</sub> , ng/mL											
d 0	6.3		10.5		17.6		3.09		0.01	0.91	
d 10	20.0	53.5	21.9	49.6	24.0	60.9	2.16	0.01	0.01	0.04	0.01
d 21	13.2	26.7	13.6	23.9	14.4	31.6	2.16	0.01	0.16	0.15	0.01
d 35	16.7	18.0	14.5	19.3	14.9	19.5	2.16	0.42	0.94	0.83	0.04

<sup>1</sup> A total of 180 mixed-sex pigs (PIC 327 × 1050; initially 21 d of age) were weaned from the first sow group and used in a 3 × 2 split plot design for 35 d to determine the effects of maternal and early nursery dietary vitamin D<sub>3</sub> on growth performance.

<sup>2</sup> Dietary vitamin D<sub>3</sub> treatments were fed in Phase 1 diets from d 0 to 10. Common Phase 2 and 3 diets were fed from d 10 to 21 and d 21 to 35, respectively. Common diets were formulated to contain 1, 800 IU/kg vitamin D<sub>3</sub>. Treatments are expressed as IU/kg of the complete diet.

<sup>3</sup> Ten pigs/treatment were bled to determine serum 25(OH)D<sub>3</sub>. Day effect, *P* < 0.01 and maternal × diet × day interaction, *P* = 0.32.

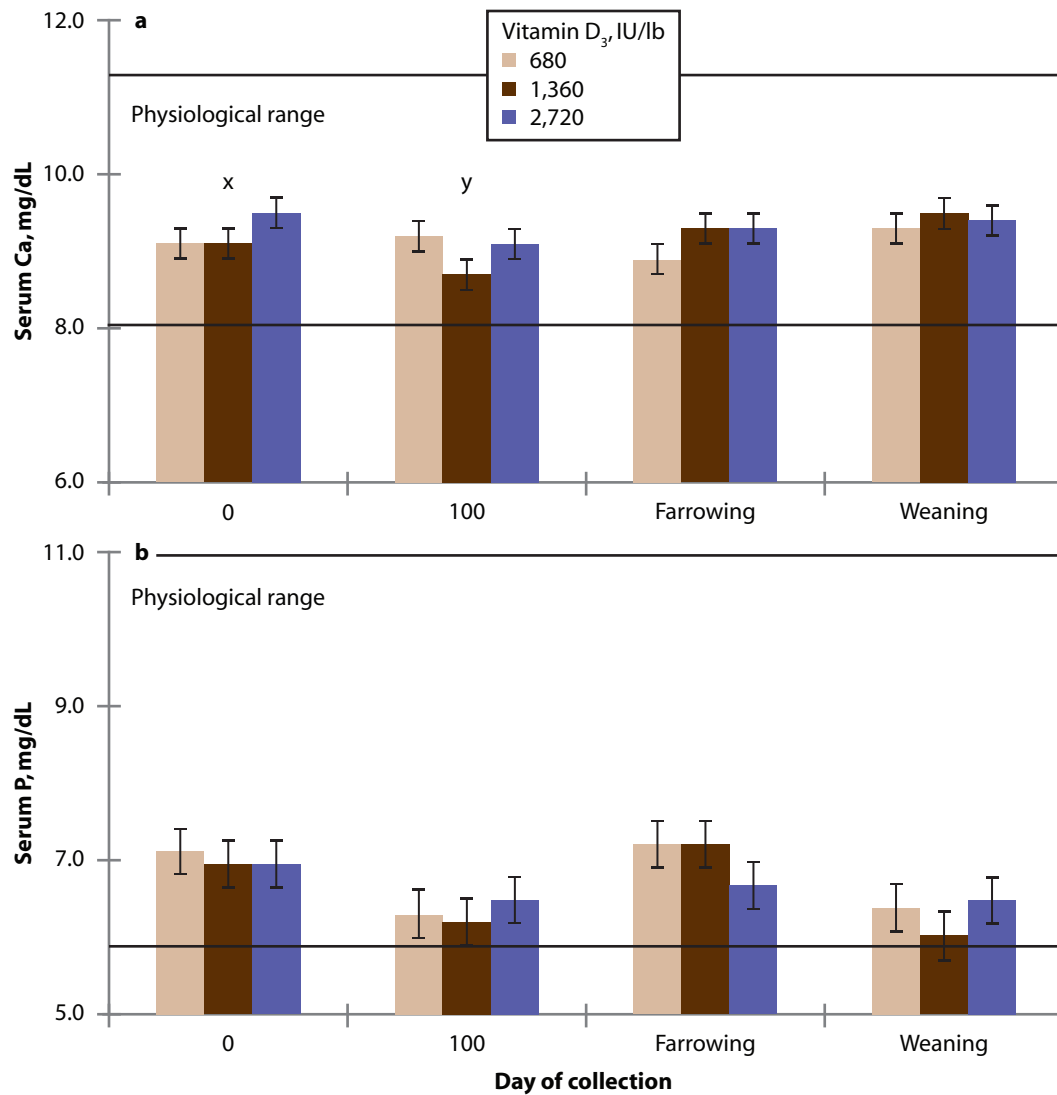


Figure 1. Serum Ca and P concentrations (mg/dL) at d 0 and 100 of gestation, farrowing, and weaning (d 21 of lactation) in sows fed diets formulated to supply 680, 1,320, or 2,720 IU vitamin D<sub>3</sub>/lb of the complete diet. Superscripts denote differences ( $P < 0.05$ ) due to: a, linear dietary effect; and b, a quadratic dietary effect. Superscripts denote tendencies ( $0.05 < P \leq 0.10$ ) due to: x, linear dietary effects; and y, quadratic dietary effects. Physiological range based on Friendship et al. (1984).

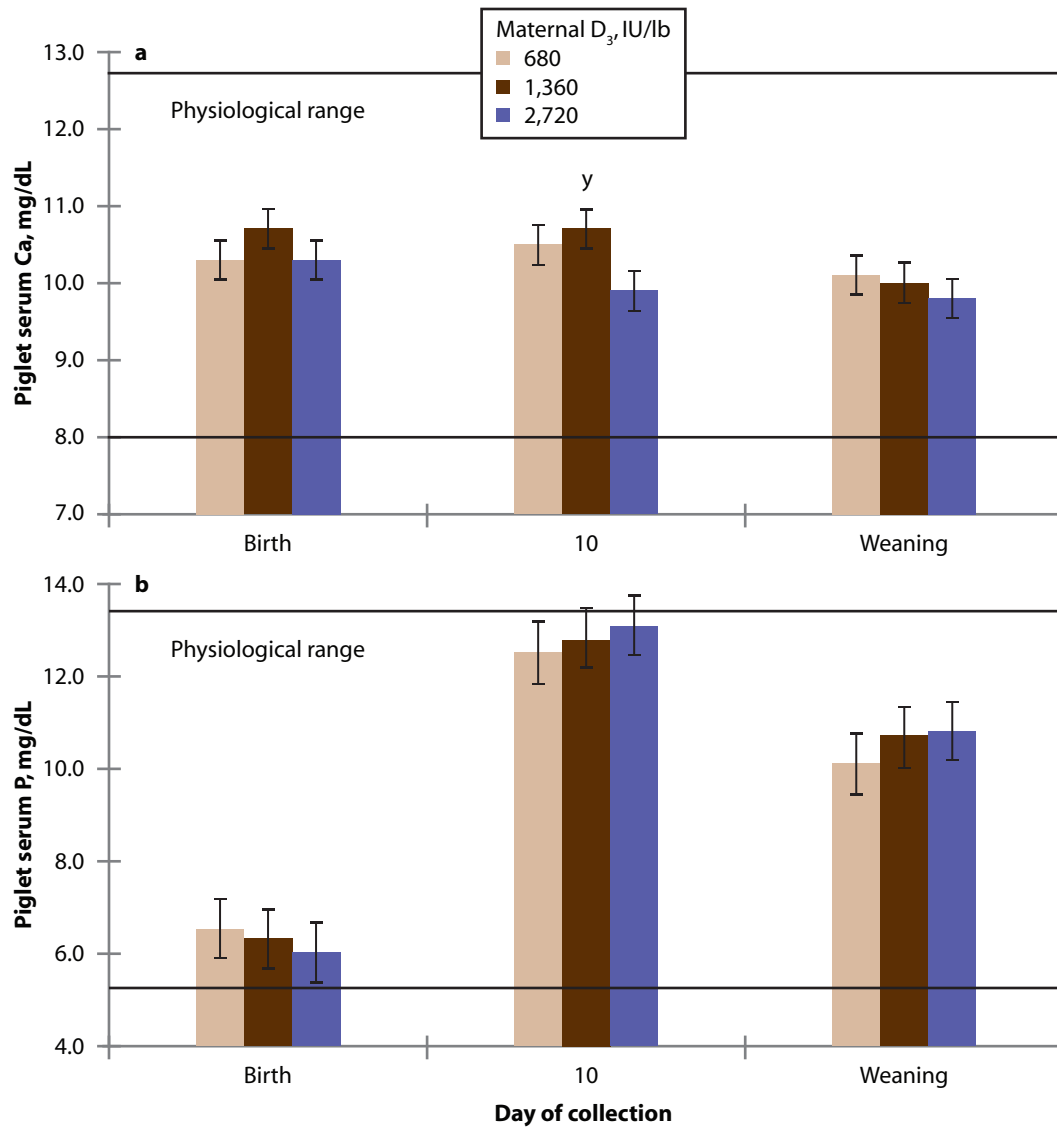


Figure 2. Serum Ca and P concentrations (mg/dL) at birth, d 10, and weaning (d 21) in pigs from sows fed diets formulated to supply 680, 1,320, or 2,720 IU vitamin D<sub>3</sub>/lb of the complete diet. Superscripts denote differences ( $P < 0.05$ ) due to: a, linear maternal diet effect; and b, quadratic maternal diet effect. Superscripts denote tendencies ( $0.05 < P \leq 0.10$ ) due to: x, linear maternal diet effect; and y, quadratic maternal diet effect. Physiological range is based on Friendship et al. (1984).

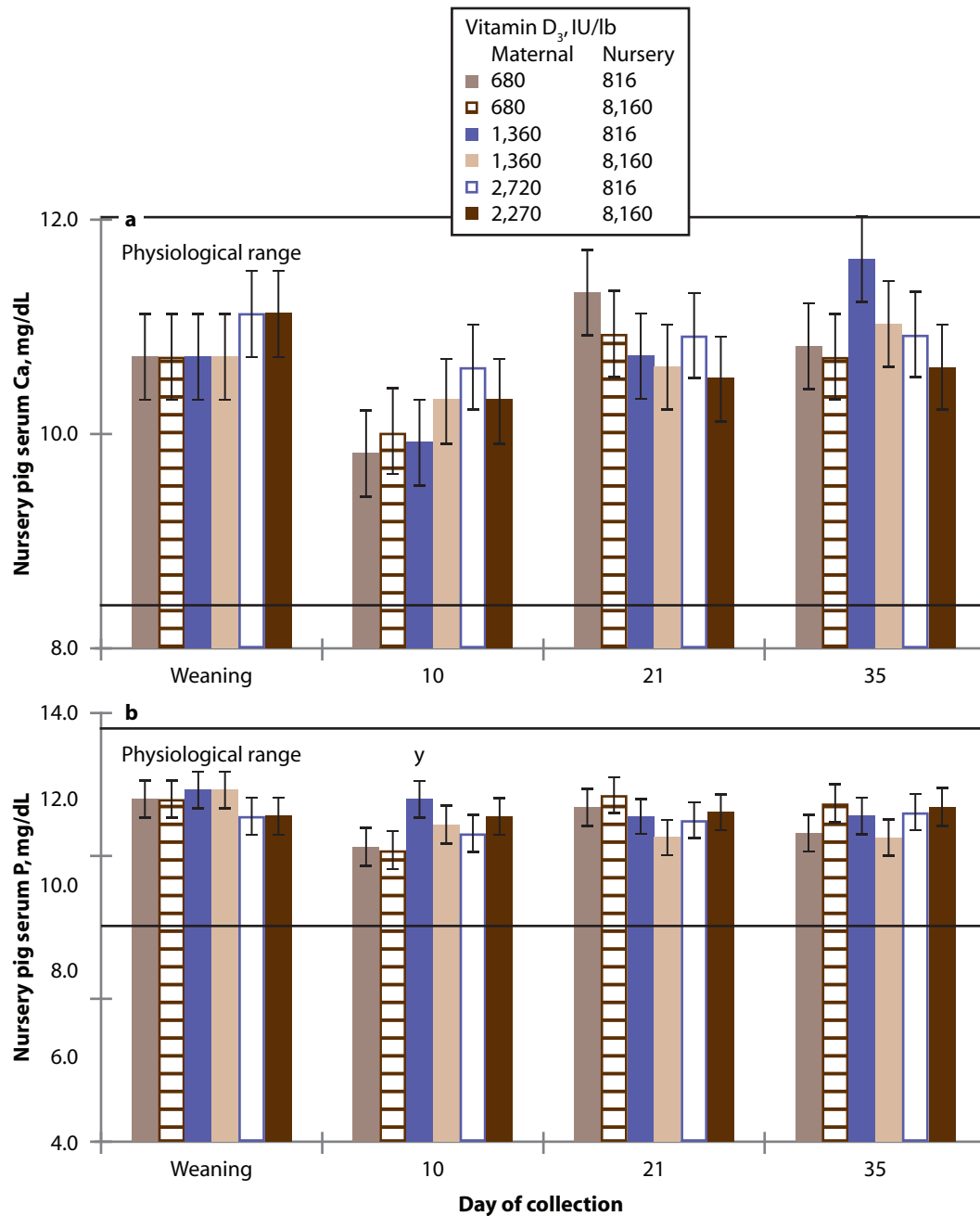


Figure 3. Serum Ca and P concentrations (mg/dL) at weaning, d 10, d 21, and d 35 in nursery pigs from sows fed diets formulated to supply either 680, 1,320 or 2,720 IU vitamin D<sub>3</sub>/lb of the complete diet, and fed diets formulated to either 816 or 8,160 IU vitamin D<sub>3</sub>/lb from weaning until d 10. Superscripts denote differences ( $P < 0.05$ ) due to: a, linear maternal diet effect; b, a quadratic maternal diet effect; and c, diet effect. Superscripts denote tendencies ( $0.05 < P \leq 0.10$ ) due to: x, linear maternal diet effect; and y, quadratic maternal diet effect; z, diet effect. Physiological range is based on Friendship et al. (1984).